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While Others Build: The Commonsense Approach to the Strategic Defense Initiative

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ing and testing a cost control system for the Navy's Polaris program. During the mid-1960s, he served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, and in the early 1970s was Assistant Secretary of the Army responsible for procurement, installations, and logistics. Between these two stints in the Pentagon, Fox taught defense-related management courses at the Harvard Business School. In 1974 he published *Arming America: How the U.S. Buys Weapons*, which was used extensively by students in national security programs. The one-trillion-dollar five-year buildup of defense spending in the 1980s provided an unusual incentive for Fox to reexamine the defense acquisition process and to try to understand what changes had occurred in the 15-year period since his earlier book. Currently he is again a professor at the Harvard Business School, where James L. Field is an associate fellow.

Why is this book depressing? The reason is simple. It leaves the impression that significant problems in weapons acquisition are not merely intractable, but are unsolvable without drastic and revolutionary changes in the way the defense establishment does business. Fox comes to the conclusion that the situation in weapons acquisition is worse in 1988 than it was in 1973 when he wrote *Arming America*, and worse than in 1960. This has occurred in spite of every Secretary of Defense having a commitment to efficient management of the defense acquisition process, in spite of many studies which have identified problems with the process

and suggested ways to reform it, and in spite of numerous efforts from within DoD and/or instigated or supported by Congress.

Fox describes how Rockwell turned Congress into its lobbyists for the B-1 bomber by spreading the work among 5,200 subcontractors in 48 states and 400 congressional districts. This enabled the Air Force, with help from Congress, to channel funds to the B-1 contracting team at Rockwell from 1977-1981 and sustain Rockwell's B-1 team after the 1977 decision by President Carter to cancel the B-1 until its revival after the 1980 election. Fox brings to light many other problems and how they impact defense acquisition. These problems range from the impact of the current military promotion system on DoD program manager decision making to congressional micromanagement of DoD activities.

Why is this book so important? If enough people interested in American national security come to understand how the weapons acquisition process really works, perhaps a consensus about the vital need to reform the system can be developed among a large enough and influential enough group to allow the currently prevailing obstacles to such reform to be overcome. This book facilitates development of that understanding.

D.K. PACE
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Codevilla, Angelo. *While Others Build: The Commonsense Approach to*

the Strategic Defense Initiative. New York: The Free Press, 1988. 256pp. \$22.50

This well-written, informative, even passionate book is at once perplexing and disturbing. The author seeks to deny the realities of physical laws, of science, of research and development practice, and of prudent testing and analysis. In so doing and in pleading for immediate acquisition and deployment of the pieces of a Strategic Defense System that he alleges are in existence to satisfy an urgent requirement perceived only by a few, Codevilla damages the credibility of his thesis. That he enjoyed the confidence of some high elected officials as a staff advisor is the perplexing and disturbing element.

According to the author, the cabal most dedicated to stifling the Strategic Defense Initiative and most dedicated to insuring that no such systems and components will be deployed in any foreseeable future were those at the very top of the Reagan administration, including the President himself, an inattentive Secretary of Defense, Caspar Weinberger, the entire military component of the strategic forces, and the arch practitioner of duplicity and mendacity, Lt. Gen. James Abrahamson, USAF, Director of the Strategic Defense Initiative Office until January 1989. The author's evidence for his assertions is the adherence by these responsible individuals to standards of technical quality and potential operational reality in the development of strategic defense systems concepts.

Throughout the book Codevilla weaves fact and fantasy, always with the implicit and, occasionally, explicit intention to impugn the motives or the competence of those whom he perceives to be in the way of headlong deployment of existing, half-proven ideas and partial systems.

Swept aside as irrelevant to his mission of defending America from the pusillanimous military decision makers are the realities of transition from concepts shown to be "interesting" or having potential by analysis or in laboratory demonstrations to become effective, deployable weapons systems. Indeed, Codevilla scorns those who analyze even the first stages of measure-countermeasure as little better than saboteurs of America's defenses. It appears that salvation, and the real agenda of this book, lie in the creation of a U.S. defense force with the sole mission of defending America from Soviet "strategic" attack. It can be presumed that such a force would be manned by true believers, by people strong enough to overcome the doubts cast by physical laws and operational reality. Bully.

Codevilla does not provide a recipe for getting rid of those in the Congress, on both sides of the aisle, who possess critical acumen and a sense of economic feasibility such as is embodied in the penetrating economic concept of opportunity cost. His allusions to Congressional leadership, with the exception of his patron(s), are not flattering. The impression is left that most of the Congressional people are either

too superficial or too ideologically blinded to be taken very seriously. He seems to include Members and their staffs in his low esteem. He did stop short of questioning their patriotism. Perhaps he has a sequel in the works that will cover that point.

Implicit in his text is the conviction that the United States is so enmeshed in the weapons systems development and acquisition processes that all sense of urgency has been lost. Competition for defense dollars and the desire on the part of each of the Services to protect its "pet rocks" further exacerbates the seeming reluctance to seize the opportunities presented by strategic defense. The effect of establishing demanding performance criteria and of demanding timely growth potential is seen as a sophistic way to keep SDI activities in the laboratory and out of the competition for major funding. The canard here is that the whole defense community and their lackeys in Congress are conspiring to use the pursuit of perfection as an excuse for inaction.

Make no mistake about it. This book is well-written and well, if selectively, documented by numbers and references to various official and unofficial study efforts and by reference to Hearings and other activities in and through Congressional channels that were designed to surface the "true" facts concerning SDI. The enlightened self-interest of those in possession of such facts is fairly apparent.

In the judgment of this reviewer, this book is a disservice to the

author's cause. The concept of opportunity costs applies in the political arena as well as in the economic arena. If, in the haste to deploy elements or layers of an eventual SDI, we encounter a major performance shortfall or a cost and schedule overrun, it is quite possible that the American people, through their representatives in the Congress, would terminate further work. Even we research and development "handwringers" would not welcome that outcome.

The book does another type of disservice. All of us are impatient with the constraints and shackles of scientific and engineering reality. Most engineers and scientists only dimly understand military and large-scale systems operations. Most simply cannot accept the realities of operational degradation nor understand its pervasiveness. The name discipline appends to science, engineering, and to the military art. Codevilla suggests that determination and belief can reverse the constraints; that action, any action, has to be preferable to orderly scientific and engineering development. That is simply the wrong message to give to military professionals and to the American people.

It may come as a surprise that this reviewer does not recommend this book for the military library. Those who enjoy psychological and motivational speculation might wish to use this book to develop theses on how an individual so obviously articulate and motivated can get so far off base. Perhaps there is another

agenda or other facts that unravel the riddle.

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Bates, Charles C. and Fuller, John F. *America's Weather Warriors, 1814-1985*. College Station: Texas A&M Univ. Press, 1986. 360pp. \$29.95

Although the battlefields of war are eternally influenced by weather, history is replete with examples of weather's enforced deference to strategy and maneuvers of policy. Proper acknowledgement and exploitation of meteorological conditions, however, have altered the course of history.

Charles Bates and John Fuller have produced a well-researched chronology of America's weathermen and women over the past 170 years. Though their narrative begins in 1814, the authors' strongest contribution is contemporary, particularly, the Vietnam era. Plagued only by a plethora of weather warrior names, this well-annotated history will read best to those in the business. John Fuller's shorter *Weather and War* (27 pp.) provides an excellent compendium for anyone interested in weather's influence on combat.

The authors report a number of significant events that illustrate weather's intimate relationship with all aspects of war, from large amphibious operations, through logistical and medical problems, to

bombing accuracy and walls of suspended dust in the Persian Gulf.

One of the earliest and most distinguished contributors to our understanding of "weather" in its broadest sense was Lieutenant Matthew F. Maury, who developed charts illustrating optimal sailing tracks in the North Atlantic. Maury earned his "Pathfinder of the Seas" title in 1853 by saving an estimated \$15 million per year in sailing time for the merchant marine.

The complexity of European weather and the awesome consequences of not taking it seriously was an overriding factor in strategic planning during World War II. Ironically, with greatly improved forecasting technology via satellite, the strategic lessons of World War II and Korea were often ignored in Southeast Asia by far-distant political decision makers.

Winston Churchill, the strongest advocate of attacking what he called the "soft underbelly of Europe," was highly concerned about the weather prior to the invasion of Sicily. The "greatest amphibious operation so far attempted in history... all depended on the weather."

What kind of weather? What natural conditions? "Eisenhower... wanted as much tactical surprise as possible... there had to be a waxing moon because troop carriers needed some moonlight for finding assigned drop zones for the paratroops... the naval fleet needed total darkness to cover its approach... boat operators wanted